

APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

2013 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant: Saint Paul Neighborhood Network

Application ID: 13AC145665

Program Name: Community Technology Empowerment Project (CTEP)

For the purpose of enhancing our programs by improving the quality and quantity of applications to the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), we are providing specific feedback regarding the strengths and weaknesses of this application. These comments are not meant to represent a comprehensive assessment; rather the analysis represents those elements that had the greatest bearing on the rating of the application. Please note that this feedback consists of summary comments from more than one reviewer. For this reason, some of the comments may seem to be inconsistent or contradictory. Comments are not representative of all of the information used in the final funding decision.

Reviewers' Summary Comments:

(+) The Center for Rural Policy and Development reported in 2012 that 22% of Twin Cities' residents do not have a computer in their home. In 2012 the City of Minneapolis Community Technology Survey reported that 28% of residents lack broadband access and only 69% of those surveyed felt comfortable with searching and applying for jobs on line.

(+) In 2012 only 29% of the individuals who the applicant serviced were able to pass the basic computer test prior to instruction.

(+) Twin Cities has the nation's highest unemployment disparity; overall unemployment is 6%; the rates increase to 10% for Latinos and 18% for African-Americans.

(+) The applicant used census data, Department of Commerce data, Pew and Taleo research data to establish the fact that jobs in the 21st century will require some level of computer literacy, even for the GED being offered only online starting in 2014.

(+) The applicant has described the lack of technical experience and access of its community population to current technology. They provide information on the current employment expectations such as 95% of new jobs requiring technical skills, and they describe the extent to which the current population lacks access to current technology and the current processes used to search for and acquire employment.

(+) The applicant has explained that their logic in their selection of a target issue and target population has to do with evidence gathered from their past experience as an organization. They cite a growing demand for an increase in the services that their organization provided in building individual technological capacity and the need to expand the number of sites and individuals who can provide this type of training.

(+) The applicant showed evidence of need by giving examples of how their service in the past few years has made positive impacts on clients who are low-income, ethnically diverse and with disabilities around computer literacy.

- (+) Pre-test data from 2012 shows that only 29% of community members seeking services were computer proficient, demonstrating the community's need for digital literacy education.
- (+) Data from service sites document an increased demand for digital literacy services in the community. The fact that only 69% of Twin City residents surveyed by the Center for Rural Policy and Development in 2012 felt comfortable searching and applying for a job online was particularly strong evidence of this.
- (+) AmeriCorps members will be providing direct service to community members during their experiences. They will be providing technology literacy skills to community members to build the community members individual technology capacity and to improve job placement skills and potential economic opportunities for the community members. The applicant has indicated that the AmeriCorps members will be participating in a series of extensive trainings to prepare them to deliver a standardized technology curriculum and associated assessments in basic computer skills, internet usage, operating systems, and e-mail and word processing. During the second phase of their experiences, AmeriCorps members will serve one on one with the community members to apply their technology knowledge to real world applications in job searches and completing online applications. The third phase to their service will involve mobilizing and training additional volunteers to serve in a similar capacity.
- (+) The applicant has indicated that because of the addition of the forty AmeriCorps members in their organization they will be able to expand their organization to three to six additional sites able to deliver the technology curriculum, allow ten more agencies to certify 350 residents in technology certification and allow an additional one-hundred community residents to verify they have obtained employment as a result of the their training and increased technology knowledge.
- (+) The applicant explains that the increase in demand for the program's services warrants ten additional Members to meet the community's needs.
- (+) CTEP's train-the-trainer model for computer instruction increases volunteerism in the community, thereby building capacity for expanded service delivery.
- (+) Members will be trained to deliver direct service through use of the computer literacy curriculum. Participants completing the curriculum with 85% proficiency will be able to access the internet, apply for jobs online, make medical appointments online and by inference, reduce their anxiety regarding the use of the computer for job search and routine appointments.
- (+) The applicant has based its instructional service in technology education that will be applied during this grant on evidence-based curriculum and assessments. The curriculum that they are using has been created based on the Northstar Digital Literacy Standards and created for their organization based on the service of specific educational consultants. The assessments that they will be using for technology certification were designed and created based on research from the University of New Brunswick and Dorothy MacKeracher's theories of adult learning. The training that is provided for the AmeriCorps members prior to their service with the community members and the subsequent AmeriCorps-delivered interventions have all been well detailed and outlined.
- (+) The Northstar Standards and Assessment were rigorously developed to be highly accessible to the target

population and to match the needs and demands of local employers.

(+) The applicant describes, based on past history and experiences, what has happened with their efforts and the expectations that they have as a result of the AmeriCorps member service to the community. They indicated that they hope to instill a lifelong ethic of service and responsibility in the AmeriCorps members with a stronger and larger volunteer base in the community. They hope to extend the collaborative relationship between their CTEP organization and the AmeriCorps parent organization (CNCS). They plan for improved relationships between the AmeriCorps members and their supervising organization, supplemental education in civic service and civic education. Finally, they plan for the volunteers that are trained and generated by the AmeriCorps members to have an ongoing commitment to service and responsibility in their community.

(+) The applicant proposed an evidence-informed Northstar Curriculum that will provide online assessments and training for participants who score less than 85%.

(+) The applicant will use a data tracking mechanism called OnCorps to assess measures and outcomes that is comprehensive and will collect data pre-/post-participant experience. For example, CTEP staff track outcomes of Members through on-going monthly training targeting specific skills building areas.

(+) The applicant's high rates of Member enrollment and retention are evidence of program effectiveness.

(+) The applicant's generation of more than 77,000 volunteer hours over 12 years is evidence of the program's community impact and of the value of CNCS's investment.

(+) The program exceeded its performance measures with 100% of their Members meeting their service objectives.

(+) The program is using pre- and post-tests to track the success of the program.

(+) The applicant's intervention will use several quantifiable methods of measurement and evaluation: e.g., pre-/post-tests, post-test scores must meet 85% accuracy benchmarks; certification assessments to determine the skill level of participants; and attendance records.

(+) The applicant demonstrated measurable community impact by citing the use of the instrument outside of the original CTEP network, at a local school district and a community college as well as libraries nationally.

(-) The applicant did not cite data/research to back up assertions that key barriers to computer and internet access are poverty, disability and limited English proficiency among residents in the Twin Cities.

(-) The applicant does not link the economic employment disparities and disadvantages in the community such as, 6% overall – 10-18% for minorities, with their technology goals that are described in the grant application.

(-) It was unclear how Members would recruit volunteers to continue to provide the direct service once their years of service were completed.

(-) The applicant does not provide specific details about what they would not be able to accomplish without the

assistance of the AmeriCorps member support or how this would impact their ability to expand their services to individuals in the community.

(-) Specific examples of Member roles were not identified.

(-) The applicant has not provided details on the type of slots or the Member service years (hours of service) that the AmeriCorps members will be completing. They only reference a three-year commitment.

(-) The capacity building for the site and/or organizations at which the Members would be placed was unclear.